615. Mr. Joseph Pettah.—Will the Government be pleased to place on the table copy of letter dated 7th May 1932, from the Director of Public Instruction and of D. P. dated 27th May 1932, D. 3 C. 943/1106, Development Department, referred to in paragraph 129 of the Report on Educational Survey?

Mr. I. N. Menon.—Copies are appended. (*Appendix XIV*).

Mr. Joseph Pettah —In the letter under reference speaking of the failure of the Madras Education Council the Director says that they seem to have forgotten or lost sight of one essential fact, the clear idea as to what a local educational body is competent to deal with and what it is not. Will the Government give the House an idea of what they can and what they cannot?

Mr. I. N. Menon.—The principle is not special with regard to this local body. Anything of a technical nature will have to be reserved and the rest can always be handed over to local body.

Mr. Joseph Pettah.—My question is with reference to the educational body. Will the Government kindly give a detailed information ?

Mr. I. N. Menon.—The principle is quite clear. Nothing which is of a technical nature can be handed over to them, say for instance, prescription of syllabus.

Mr. Joseph Pettah.—Is that work undertaken by the District Educational Councils?

Mr. I. N. Menon.—That is not undertaken. Then, grant-in-aid.

Mr. Joseph Pettah.—Will the Government give us one instance of the work of the latter category which local institutions are not competent to deal with?

Mr. I. N. Menon.—Grant-in-aid, for instance, is made by the District Educational Council. They aid schools and classes and money is allotted and they distributte it also. A list is sent to the Government.

Mr. Joseph Pettah —Is the amount of grant determined by them ?

Mr. I. N. Menon.—Yes.

Mr. Joseph Pettah.—Is that a matter of technical character?

Mr. I. N. Menon.—There is a great deal of technical character about it. They must know what is the difference between efficient and inefficient school and distinguish one which is worthy from one which is unworthy of aid.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

and supervision which might be caused by the existence of two markets on the same day.

The enclosures are returned.

APPENDIX XIV (a).

(Vide Answer to Question No. 615).

Letter C. 7036/1104, dated 7th May 1932, from the Director of Public Instruction.

Board of Education—constitution of.

Reference.—*Official Memorandum, dated 15th February 1932, D—3—943 of 1106.*

Adverting to Official Memorandum, dated 15th February 1932, D—3—943 of 1106, I have the honour to submit that my detailed proposals for the constitution of a Board of Education will lose a great deal of their significance if presented in isolation from the general scheme of local self-Government in Education which forms part of my recommendation to be embodied in the report on the Educational Survey. My idea is that the new machinery of educational administration should be considered in its relation to and as issuing from the finding recorded by the Survey.

In another sense, however, the Survey cannot be complete without the functioning of the Board of Education and still more of the local education authorities whose creation forms one of my recommendations, because I have been gradually driven to the conclusion that some local body of educational intelligence is alone competent to pronounce an opinion on the educational needs of any locality and to estimate the adequacy of the existing provision of the education of the children of that locality. The creation of some kind of local education authority is an urgent necessity. The need for the present Educational Survey itself arose out of the unsatisfactory distribution of schools made by the department with insufficient knowledge of local conditions and in response to individual applications from intending school managers. My proposal for the creation of a Board of Education will lose a great deal of its significance unless we assume the existence of local educational authorities because I intend that a large proportion of the members of the Board should be drawn from local educational bodies. I may, therefore, be permitted to preface my proposals for the constitution of a board of education with a few words on the local Educational bodies themselves.

Expert opinion in Madras is sceptical as to the usefulness and even the practicability of local self-Government in education. Some of the educationists whom I consulted remarked that their experience of District Educational Councils in Madras had convinced them that decentralisation on the local self-governing plan was likely to fail. But the one essential point to be borne in mind—one which seems to have been largely lost sight of by the Madras authorities in constituting their District Educational Councils—is a clear idea as to what a lay local educational body is competent to deal with and what it is not. In the same way there are certain matters relating to Education which had better be left to such local bodies instead of being directly administered by the Education Department. For instance, a local self-Government organisation is in a better position to judge whether in a particular locality there is need for any more new schools or whether any old ones can be abolished with advantage. Fortunately we have already in existence of a number of Panchayats which may be made to form our starting point. At present there are 86 Panchayats including the two in Cranganur. These Panchayats in the different taluks may be grouped into Educational Districts and in each such district a local education authority called a School

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

Board may be constituted. The members of the board may be elected by the Panchayats constituting the group. For instance, the Panchayats of Pallivirutti, Kumbalanghi and Chellanam may constitute a single Educational District with its own School Board the members of which will be returned by the three constituent Panchayats. These local School Boards may be invested with such powers as may be safely entrusted to popular bodies with no expert knowledge of Education. It is for instance the body most competent to say whether a proposed school within its jurisdiction should be recognised or aided. In course of time, to ensure that such recommendations may not be made in an irresponsible manner, it may be found desirable if each locality is made to bear a portion of the cost of education in respect of the schools called into existence on its recommendations.

The Board of Education will form the central consultative body of the Department of Education. It will be composed of (1) members elected by (nominated from in the beginning) the school boards in each taluk, (2) one member elected jointly by the 4 Municipalities, and (3) such officials of the Education Department as are selected by the Government for the purpose.

As the main subject of this letter is the constitution of the Board of Education, I must refrain from entering into details as to the composition of the local Education bodies. The point to be made clear is that the proposed Board of Education being mainly and advisory body has got to be essentially a representative one unlike the English Board of Education which exercises extensive powers of superintendence and administration without this representative character the usefulness of the Board will be greatly diminished and local educational opinion will have no means of influencing the educational policy of the Government. The main points for consideration are (1) the degree to which local representation should be allowed, (2) the number and extent to which other interests should be represented on the Board, (3) the mode of the Board's operation, (4) the relations of the Board to the other organs of the Education Department, and (5) the powers of the Board of Education.

Composition of the Board.—(i) In my letters dated 7th July 1931 and 25th July 1931, C. 7036/1104, I suggested the general principle on which the Board should be constituted. While I adhere to that principle on further reflection I propose to make some slight modifications with a view to keep the size of the Board within reasonable limits and to ensure its representative character so that it may serve as the central organ of Educational Intelligence. I therefore recommend that the Board may be constituted as follows.—

(a) President ..Director of Public Instruction.
(b) Members

(1) One member elected by the School Boards of Cochin-Kanayannur Taluk.
(2) do do Mukundapuram Taluk.
(3) do do Trichur Taluk.
(4) do do Talappalli Taluk.
(5) do do Chittur Taluk.
(6) do do Cranganur Taluk.
(7) One member elected jointly by the Municipalities.
(8) One Inspector of Schools.
(9) The Inspectress of Schools.
(10) One member nominated by Government from among the educationally backward communities, and

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

(11) A Secretary appointed by Government as suggested in my letter dated 7th July 1931.

In this connection I invite the attention of Government to para 1 of my letter, dated 24th July 1931, C- No. 7036/1104. The successful working of any new constitutional organisation depends to a very great extent on the proper selection of personnel and I would therefore, again urge that the members of the first Board of Education may be selected by Government from among the Panchayats, and not left to election at the start. In this opinion I am supported by the Registrar of Panchayats who warned me that to throw open the membership of the Board of Education to election from the beginning was to court disaster. I, therefore, submit, that in the first instance the Board may be constituted by means of nomination, that as a special case the life of the first Board may be restricted to two years and at the termination of that period Government may dispense with nomination as suggested in my letter of 7th July 1931. I fully agree with the Diwan that the usefulness of the Board will be greatly diminished in the eyes of the public if its members are nominated and not elected at the same time it will be a great misfortune if an essentially workable and progressive step in the devolution of powers to the people should be frustrated by the careless choice of representatives. In this opinion I am sure I shall be supported even by a majority of Panchayats themselves.

(2) With regard to the representation of other interests on the Board of Education it seems expedient not to err on the side of excess. It must be borne in mind that the Board of Education will be mainly concerned with the organisation of Elementary education and as such there is very little need for the representation of any profession or trade on this body. Should experience, however, of the actual working of the Board suggest any reform on this head, it may be carried out at a later stage. I have, therefore, deleted my original suggestion that the Legislative Council, the Teachers' Association and the Managers' Association should sent representatives to the Board. The presence of the Inspecting Officers being very valuable on an advisory body, the names of the Inspectress of Schools and of one of the Inspectors have been included in the composition of the Board. As elementary education is of very great importance to the backward communities a member to safeguard their special interests has been proposed. Any further changes which may be found necessary may be effected after the Board has worked for some time.

(3) and (4) The Board of Education being advisory in character will have no direct dealings with the executive officers of the department except the Director of Public Instruction who is its Chairman. As a rule educational matters of general interest will be referred to the Board by the department for its advice, and even when they are not so referred any member of the Board will be at liberty to place before it for its consideration after obtaining the permission of the Chairman any matter which may be considered to be of importance. The members of the Board will be in constant touch with their constituencies and shall be at liberty to refer to the local Education authorities any matter in which they consider such reference is necessary. The officers of the Department will supply information which the Board or its members may require from time to time.

(5) In proposing the creation of a new organisation it is not possible to define in advance all its powers in detail, and the following suggestions are made only as a tentative beginning. Applications for the opening of new schools or for the raising of the standard of old ones, requests for aid

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

and sanction for the abolition of the existing schools shall be referred to the Board for its advice. Disputes between teachers and Managers of aided schools, involving anything more than matters mere discipline shall be referred to the Board. It shall be competent for the Board to concert measures on its own initiative for the provision of new schools of suitable accommodation and equipment of already existing institutions. The education of specially backward communities or of backward tracts and the grant of special facilities to them, and problems of general interest relating to vocational education will be placed before the Board for its advice. The preliminary budget estimates will be placed before the Board for its information. The powers of the Board shall for the present be purely advisory and the decision of the Director of Public Instruction shall be final in respect of any matter brought before the Board.

(6) The Board shall ordinarily meet at least once a quarter more often if found necessary on a written requisition made by four members to consider any matter of urgency. As already suggested by me in the first letter on the subject, the Board shall hold its office and its meetings in the Office of the Director of Public Instruction. To carry on the work of correspondence, to write the minutes of and Proceedings at meetings the services of a clerk may be sanctioned.

The constitution of the Board of Education and of the local Education authorities need not wait till the report of the Survey is published. In that their assistance will render the work of the Survey more complete and thorough going. As regards the institution of School Boards I am corresponding with the Registrar of Panchayats to propose a workable grouping of the several Panchayats in the different taluks. As soon as I am placed in possession of this information my proposals for the creation of School Boards will be submitted to Government.

(True copy)

APPENDIX XIV (b).

(Vide Answer to Question No. 615).

PROCEEDINGS OF THE DIWAN OF COCHIN.

Development Department.

Board of Education—Constitution of—

Read Director's letter C. 7036/1128, dated 6th May 1932.

Order D. 943/1106, dated 27th May 1932.

The Director's proposals are approved generally and he is requested to submit the details referred to in the last para of his letter read above. He is also requested to prepare forthwith definite rules regarding constitution, powers and working of the two sets of bodies.

(True extract)

RAMA VARMHA TAMPURAN,
Secretary to the Diwan.

To

The Director of Public Instruction.

(True copy)

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